

No Objection to Declassification in Part 2011/01/03 :
LOC-HAK-61-2-2-9 *UVI* *See*

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept. review
completed pages 3-10

Red/Brent -

MORI/CDF C01515961 page 2
C03208480 Page 3
C03208481 pages 4-10

DIA review completed
pages 3-10

*This is not
top-priority for HAK but
if he does not see it
before his trip, pull it
back + file it as CBE.*

Brent

Bob - He did not.

No Objection to Declassification in Part 2011/01/03 :
LOC-HAK-61-2-2-9

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION

653

SECRET (XGDS)

February 6, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM:

ROBERT B. OAKLEY 

SUBJECT:

Lebanese-Israeli Border Problems

The attached memo from William Colby and the Interagency Memorandum deal with the threat of serious Israel-fedayeen fighting in South Lebanon. They note that the present messy situation could develop into one which would have "broader negative impact, especially on the prospects for diplomatic movement concerning the Golan Heights and the Palestinians."

This is a very real threat, which could become a very disruptive reality within a few days time should Syrian President Asad and the PLO leadership decide--as they did prior to Rabat--to work together to block our negotiating strategy because they believe it offers them no hope. Without strong Syrian support, it would be most unlikely that the PLO could mount enough of an operation to disrupt negotiations.

My memoranda to you of January 15 and January 22 discuss this threat in its Lebanese-Israeli and the Syrian aspects, respectively. They include some suggestions on what practical, realistic measures the US might consider to alleviate the threat posed by developments in South Lebanon. The Strategy Paper prepared by NEA and NSC for your upcoming trip to the Middle East also notes this problem and suggests practical measures which you might take to deal with it, particularly in your talks with the Israelis and Syrians, but perhaps also with the Egyptians and Soviets.

MORI/CDF C01515961 Page 2

XGDS - 1, 2, 3

DECLAS - Date Impossible to Determine.

BYAUTH - Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

SECRET (XGDS)

~~SECRET~~

653

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

30 January 1975

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Intelligence Alert Memorandum: Possible Ramifications
of Serious Hostilities in Southern Lebanon

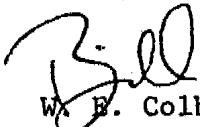
1. We are concerned that a resumption of serious Israeli-fedayeen fighting in southern Lebanon will have a broader negative impact, especially on the prospects for diplomatic movement concerning the Golan Heights and the Palestinians.

2. It is not hard to imagine more extensive Syrian involvement in the fighting and Damascus becoming much more obstinate in its overall Middle East negotiating strategy. Likewise a serious deterioration of the security situation on Israel's northern border would only reinforce Tel Aviv's reluctance to take any meaningful steps toward recognizing or dealing with the Palestinians. It would also confirm Israeli suspicions about Syria's willingness ever to offer political concessions or to hold to the terms of agreements already reached. The fedayeen, moderates and extremists alike, are collectively strengthened by any hostilities short of all-out war, and those elements most strongly opposed to compromise benefit the most.

3. Attached is an Interagency Memorandum spelling out the Intelligence Community's concerns in more detail. It was drafted by CIA and coordinated with DIA and State/INR.

4. All elements of the Intelligence Community are alerted to the potential seriousness of this situation. It is being closely monitored and new developments will be reported in current intelligence publications and further Alert Memoranda, as appropriate.

MORI/CDF C03208480 Page 3


W. F. Colby
Director

25X6

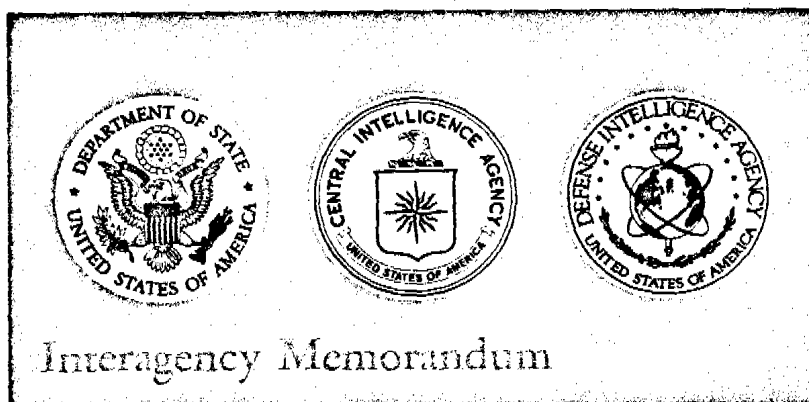
State Dept. review completed

DIA review completed

SECRET

Secret

25X1



*Possible Ramifications of Serious
Hostilities in Southern Lebanon*

State Dept. review completed

DIA review completed

MORI/CDF C03208481 Pages 4-10

Secret

DCI/NIO 227-75

30 January 1975

SECRET

25X1

30 January 1975

POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS OF SERIOUS
HOSTILITIES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON*

Introduction

1. Prolonged hostilities in southern Lebanon on the scale that occurred during mid-January have the potential to lead to the introduction into Lebanon of greater numbers of Syrian weapons and troops. This almost certainly would draw a strong Israeli military and political response. These developments, singly or together, would threaten the stability of the Beirut government and substantially increase the likelihood of major clashes among the Lebanese, fedayeen, and Israeli forces. They might also affect the peace settlement process.

2. The following is a summary of the military and political ramifications for Syria, Israel, Lebanon, and the Palestinians in the event of a recurrence of hostilities such as occurred earlier this month. At that time, fedayeen attacks on Israeli patrols in southern Lebanon prompted very heavy Israeli shelling of suspected guerrilla units in Lebanese villages and led to a brief foray into Lebanon by Israeli tanks.

Syria

3. Damascus has provided assistance to the fedayeen in southern Lebanon to help protect Syria's flank, to stiffen fedayeen resistance to Israeli military operations, and to make counterterrorism more costly to the Israelis. Syria has done nothing to discourage the fedayeen from mounting cross-border raids on Israel from southern Lebanon. The Syrians probably see some advantage in keeping tensions high along the Lebanese-Israeli border so long as the fedayeen do not provoke the Israelis into occupying southern Lebanon, attacking Syria, or breaking off peace negotiations.

4. If Syria wished to increase tensions in southern Lebanon it could introduce additional Syrian-controlled units of Saiqa, the Palestine Liberation Army, or Fatah's Yarmuk Force into the area

**This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East. It was drafted by CIA and coordinated within DIA and State/INR.*

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

from Syria at any time. Damascus would deny responsibility for military actions taken against Israel (or Lebanon) by these groups. In addition, although these forces are based primarily in Syria, there is sufficient ambiguity about the number of their forces in Lebanon at any one time that it is very difficult for outsiders to document the movement of additional units into Lebanon.

5. At the same time that it allowed or encouraged additional Palestinian forces to enter Lebanon, Syria could provide them with increased stocks of weapons and with more Syrian advisors. Damascus has in the past provided the fedayeen, or allowed them to use Syrian territory for the transit of, large amounts of weapons, including anti-aircraft guns, a few armored personnel carriers with anti-tank missiles, and hand-held SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. In addition, Syrian troops have advised the Palestinians in the use of these weapons and in general military tactics. [redacted] that there were at least 100 to 25X1 150 Syrian advisors in Lebanon in mid-January. They are located both in the Palestinian refugee camps and at fedayeen training bases in the south.

6. In the event of much heavier or prolonged fighting between the fedayeen and the Israelis, Damascus could send more regular Syrian forces into southern Lebanon. At first, such a move would be concealed and denied; later, in more serious circumstances, acknowledged and defended. Syrian forces might bring with them weapons heretofore used in Lebanon only in the northern Mount Hermon area, particularly SA-6 anti-aircraft missiles, despite Israeli warnings that such a move would not be tolerated.

7. If the Syrians took steps to become more directly involved in the conflict between the fedayeen and the Israelis, they would almost certainly also become much more obstinate in their overall Middle East negotiating strategy. Damascus would be likely to push harder for the reconvening of the Geneva peace talks, break off participation in any step-by-step negotiations until the localized conflict in southern Lebanon had ended, and threaten not to renew the UNDOF mandate.

8. Syria would not allow its participation in the fedayeen-Israeli conflict in southern Lebanon to draw it into an attack on Israeli forces in the Golan Heights. Damascus would take that step only if convinced that the Israelis were preparing imminently

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

to carry the fighting beyond southern Lebanon toward Syrian positions in Syria or to occupy areas of Lebanon bordering on Syria, or as part of a general Syrian offensive if all hope for peace negotiations was lost. 25X1

- 3 -

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

Lebanon

15. The Lebanese are both the most affected by and the least able to control any escalation of fighting in southern Lebanon. Beirut is concerned above all to avoid a direct confrontation between Lebanese and fedayeen forces, then to avoid the introduction into Lebanon of a significant number of Syrian troops, and finally to limit Israeli operations in pursuit of the fedayeen.

16. At a minimum, prolonged fighting between the fedayeen and Israelis in southern Lebanon would fuel attacks on the Lebanese government by its domestic critics, including the representatives of southerners displaced by the fighting. It would also increase the pressure on the Beirut government from Arab governments, particularly the more radical ones eager to provide military assistance to bolster Lebanon's ability to defend against Israeli attack. These pressures, if buttressed by embarrassing evidence of the Lebanese army's inability or reluctance to defend Lebanon, could lead to a succession of weak, ineffective governments or, in the extreme case, to the upset of Lebanon's delicately balanced governmental system.

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

17. Lebanese forces would seek to avoid the option of joining into any military confrontation in southern Lebanon, whether with the fedayeen, Israelis, or Syrians. A significant deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon could ultimately lead, however, to the resumption of Lebanese-fedayeen fighting such as occurred during May 1973. The capability and willingness of the Lebanese army to engage in a showdown with the fedayeen have diminished since 1973, with the result that a new outbreak of fighting would almost certainly be more destructive than that of 1973, particularly in the urban areas.

25X1

Palestinians

19. Fedayeen forces in southern Lebanon have sufficient mobility that an escalation of fighting will work to their political benefit while carrying little risk of serious military setback. Although leaders of the several fedayeen organizations are divided on whether to emphasize cross-border terrorism or more conventional military attacks on Israeli patrols, they are collectively strengthened by any hostilities short of all-out war. Widely publicized military action strengthened the positions of these leaders with their Palestinian followers, and wins them additional financial and military assistance from the other Arabs. This assistance, although designed to strengthen the Palestinians' ability to strike at Israel and defend against Israeli attack, also strengthens their ability to stand up to the Lebanese. The moderate Arab states offer this aid for political reasons, and would be opposed to the fedayeen using it to launch large-scale hostilities with the Israelis or the fedayeen.

20. The most valuable result of hostilities in southern Lebanon, so far as the relatively moderate fedayeen leaders are concerned, is that it focuses international attention on the Palestinian problem. So long as the Israelis are preoccupied with the security of their northern border, the Palestinians believe, they are less likely to make concessions that could facilitate the conclusion of further peace agreements with Syria or Egypt. This forces the principal Arab states not only

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

to remain mindful of Palestinian interests, but to emphasize to the major powers that the Palestinians must play a central role in any future peace negotiations or settlement.

21. Units of the radical fedayeen organizations that cooperate in the Rejection Front would applaud a resumption of serious fighting in southern Lebanon and would point to it as evidence to support their claim that negotiations with Israel are destined to fail. Radical elements would of course seek to drag out any such fighting, and would seize every opportunity to transform it into a resumption of general Arab-Israeli hostilities.

SECRET